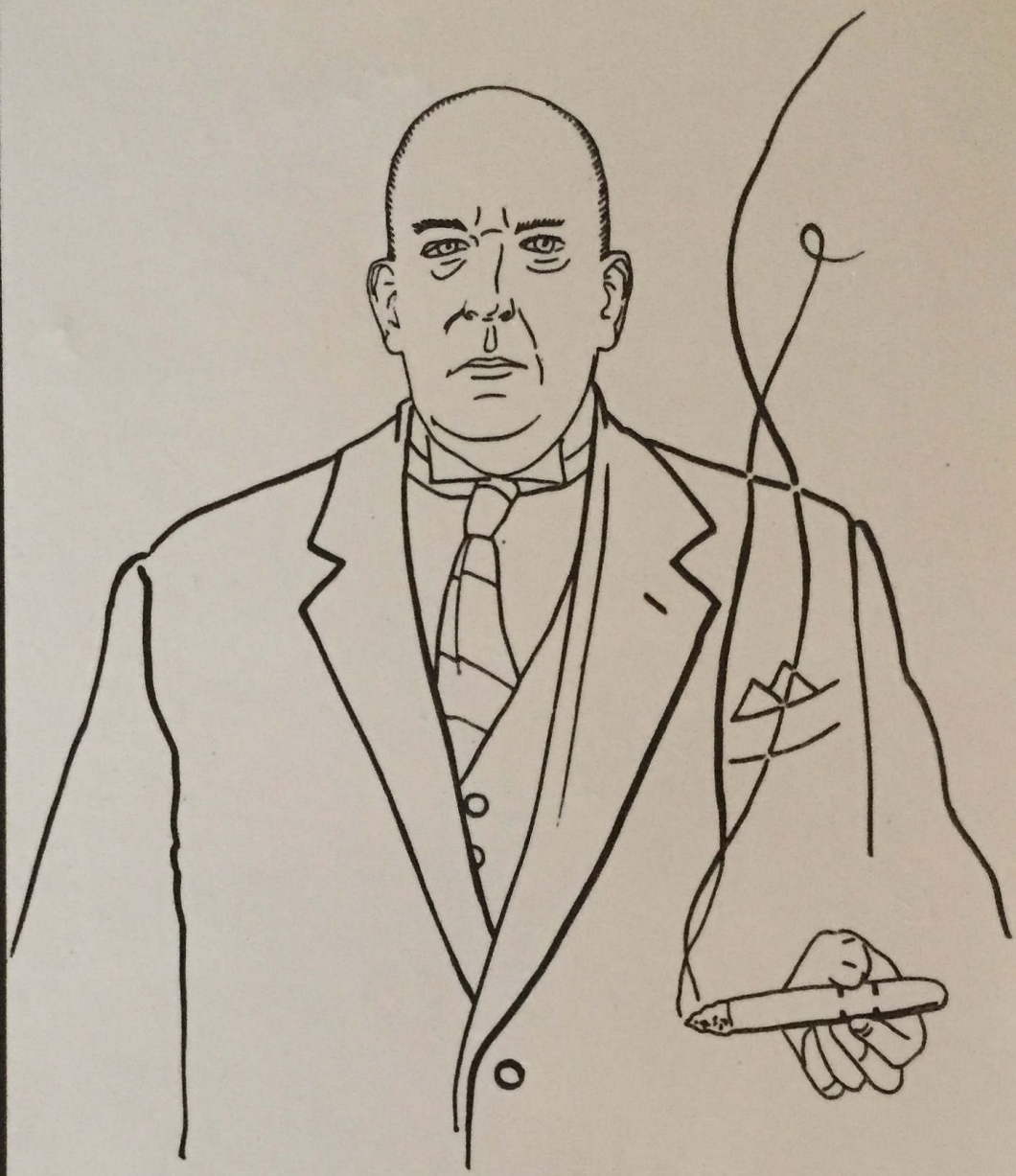
OSWALD

SPENGLER



MAN AND TECHNICS

A CONTRIBUTION TO A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

By the author of

THE DECLINE OF THE WEST

INTRODUCTION

OSWALD SPENGLER is one of the most important intellectuals of the Twentieth Century and his major work, *The Decline of the West*, a massive effort which ran to over 1,000 pages and two volumes, had sold 100,000 copies by 1927.

Oswald Spengler was born in 1880 and he was an isolated and somewhat incorrigible figure; a retired schoolteacher who endured penury in order to complete his massive work; the *magnum opus* to which he devoted his life. He once described himself as a lone scribbler, a man who peered into cultures from the outside - an analyst of meta-cultural phenomena - a man who dissected the rise, decline and fall of various civilizations - all of which he anatomised in the manner of plants, whose botanical propensities he classified à la Goethe. In a sense, therefore, he was a taxonomist of culture; a man who 'worked over' cultures, who tagged, docketed and examined them like specimens on the laboratory bench.

Oswald Spengler always believed that the inner reasons for Western collapse could be brought to the surface and this was something which struck a particular chord at the end of the Great War. When European civilization was prostrate and exhausted - wracked with pain and dissolution, as the abortive German revolution began which led to the collapse of the Prussian monarchy and its replacement with Weimar, a nominally democratic republic which rested on the guns of the Freikorps who had put down the Communists.

Most of Spengler's complicated schema involved a diurnal pattern, a travelogue of regression and withdrawal, whereby a culture developed - whether European, Byzantine, Asiatic or what not - and declined in a defined manner, almost in the manner of a living organism, which undulated towards death, towards its inevitable decline and fall. Spengler believed that any attempt to arrest this process was worse than useless, but that an antidote to Western decline could be affected through the advance towards, possibly the regression to, a new Caesarism.

All of which has led Spengler's thought to be treated as a mere coda to Nazi rule, an invitation to the prospect of an authoritarian régime, an apologia before rather than after the fact, but this is far from the case because Oswald Spengler was anti-Nazi, conservative, crabby and élitist. He regarded the Nazi's as *''prolet-'Aryans' ''* - men who were unfit to lead Germany into the new uplands which he wished to see, and like Moeller van den Bruck, a thinker he much resembles, he despised Hitler personally - seeing in him the ''mass man'' - the mass man thrown up by the people rather than the leader of the people. An opinion which he shared with a wide number of Weimar intellectuals, all of whom were men of the Right, such as Moeller van den Bruck (already mentioned), Ernst Jünger, Gottfried Benn, Stefan Georg, Arno Bronnen, Hauptmann and Carl Schmidtt. All of whom were regarded as Conservative Revolutionaries, neo-classicists, reactionaries, romantics and revolutionaries of the Right; men who believed in Prussianism and Socialism (to quote the title of one of Spengler's books).

Man & Technics, for its part, is a précis of *The Decline of the West*. More accurately, it is a compression, a condensed version of the larger work. It is an intellectual pamphlet, an essay or précis on the theme of "Decline". Where that theme is the development and decline, the growth and adaptation - above all the morphology - of human societies.

How we have arrived at where we are and how this can be traced back to where we came from!

The work contains a few infelicities, a number of anthropological errors which have been disproved by academic advance, such as the idea that human beings did not begin to speak before the advent of agricultural societies, but it is still worth reading.

The European Books Society offers *Man & Technics* as a classic reprint, a contribution to present debate and a useful addendum to *The Decline of the West* (published by George, Allen & Unwin).

We intend to publish a large range of material by such authors as Berdyaev, Jabotinsky, de Benoist and others, in order to begin an intellectual renaissance of the Right in this country.

Jonathan Bowden,
Chief Editor,
The European Books Society.

OSWALD SPENGLER -

"An intellectual novelist of seriousness and importance'.

- Thomas Mann (Nobel Prize for Literature)

"The rich cadences and lyricism of a forgotten type of prose... this type of writing is classical, no longer available to us".

- Henry Miller (Author, *Tropic of Cancer*)

"One earns intellectual respect [on the Left] *for defending that which is commonly despised."*

- Theodore Adorno, (Leader of the European Marxist 'Frankfurt School')

Written over fifty years ago *Man & Technics* is a tireless, juicy polemic presenting a merciless case for social pessimism. Spengler blasts away at utopianism and political optimism, using a fierce and iconoclastic stream of language. Colourful insights leap off the page at the reader, and the underlying logic, while questionable in places, is based on a clear vision of the true workings of society. The fundamental premise of the book is that the world is governed by natural forces, forces in man and nature, not genteel political and religious creeds.

All in all, *Man & Technics* is the work of an astute intellect, keen to the true operation of the universe. It contains startling and refreshing ideas guaranteed to stimulate your thinking, if not re-arrange your whole world-view. All but impossible to find until the European Books Society republished it, this new edition of *Man & Technics* contains an introduction by Jonathan Bowden.

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